



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #1304NJ-1 for Union City Board of Education

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant's comprehensive and coherent vision consists of a list of ten activities that relate to the four core educational assurance areas but are not defined by measurable objectives, timelines, persons responsible or deliverables. Applicant states, "Through the use of the blueprint (list of addended activities) and this application, systems are currently in place or will be developed to increase the effectiveness of educators and promote the decrease of achievement gaps across student groups, as well as increasing the rates at which students graduate from high school and are prepared for college and careers" but fails to state how these goals will be accomplished thus earning a medium range score on this initial component of the application.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All schools (a) in the Union City School District will participate in the proposed project and the method or criterion for selection was that it was determined by applicant that they all meet grant requirements for participation and all are considered Title I eligible. Applicant envisions the "human infrastructure" of hiring instructional coaches to add capacity to the organization so as to implement the proposal, but no description of their work or specific job responsibilities is noted. Student outcome goals for the project are noted by without measurability, e.g. "increasing student achievement" by how much and on what timeline? Lists (b) of participating schools with demographic data follows including requisite (c) "high need" student numbers. Applicant receives medium score for omission of specifics on role of instructional coaches and measurable goals.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant does not address this component of the RFP.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>LEA wide goals for student outcomes is expressed as performance on summative assessments with methodology for determination expressed as percent proficient and above and value added, mean growth percentile, change in achievement levels. What follows (a) are nearly unreadable, poorly copied charts that indicate an approximate two percent growth per year for students across the period of the project. Decreasing achievement gaps (b) is expressed as a chart listing the courses in which these students are engaged rather than any specific numeric goal and (c) graduation rates and (d) college enrollment are listed as subgroups 1-8 without baseline or goal data. Postsecondary Degree Attainment A4(e) is another blank table. These omissions earn a mid range score for this component of the application.</p>		

### B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	0
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Participation in pilot assessment projects including State of NJ "Lernia" and national Achieve/PARCC initiatives are noted but without data to support results. New programs and community workshops are referenced as strategies to support the assertion of the districts as a high performing urban district striving "to get better" but without charts, graphs, raw student data or other evidence to address (a)-(c) components of this portion of the RFP. Past success in implementing a federal/state five year 21st Century grant in four schools serving over 700 students per year is noted but again no data to support the claim. A NSF grant of 600K is also noted (Project SMART) in partnership with NJ Institute of Technology that increased the number of underrepresented minority students participating in the STEM pipeline but again without data to document the extent of the increase. Finally, the assertion that the Union City School District is a high-performing urban district at times outperforming larger urban districts in standardized test results by 15-20% (especially in the areas of subgroups ELL and special need students) is noted but with no supporting data. Due to lack of evidence to support any of the assertions in this portion of the application, applicant earns a score in the low range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: Applicant makes reference to compliance with state of NJ and federal audit practices in the expenditure of its budget. A district website is cited as a source, presumably accessible by the public, where district expenditures from State and local funds can be found containing a breakdown of data referenced in (a)-(d) of this portion of the application. Since no examples or narrative references to the transparency criteria are included applicant earns a mid range score on this component of the application.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	0
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: Applicant notes it met all application requirements by providing State of NJ 10 days to comment on its submission, which they declined. While applicant reiterates plans for improvement here, they fail to address the requisite conditions and sufficiency of autonomy component of the RFP with the narrative included in this section of the proposal therefore earning a low score on this component.		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	0
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: Applicant states "District will develop protocols" to address this component to include communications about policy changes, professional development, collaboration and community outreach to be managed by the planning committee for the grant but makes no reference to (a) engagement in grant development or (b) letters of support, though a few are addended in the appendix. Due to this lack of specifics and omissions on this part of the application, applicant earns a low range score.		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	0
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments: Analysis of needs and gaps and status of provision for a personalized learning environment are not addressed here other than to note a plan will be developed. Since these responses do not constitute a high-quality plan but only a plan to plan, applicant earns low range score for this portion of the application.		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: Applicant fails to describe a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching other than to site participation in pilot programs, previously referenced, and assertions of improvement since assignment of District Level III status by state of NJ in 1989. Applicant intends to expand projects and programs that have made STEM a priority in the system but no specific goals, timelines, measurable objectives or deliverables are supplied to support the intention. Multiple partnerships with community higher education organizations are noted without specifics as to how these partnerships have positively affected students. Curriculum development is referenced "The District is embarking on an ambitious endeavor over the next three years to review and revise all pre-K-12 curricula" to include technology to expose students to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives that will motivate and deepen individual student learning", but again lacking specifics as to goals, timelines, measurable objectives or deliverables. The purchase of laptops for all teachers and the establishment of an ambitious professional development plan on how to infuse the Common Core State Standards with technology is also noted as a means of personalizing the learning environment for students without noting any explicit connections between the teacher development and student outcomes. Finally, parents becoming partners through workshops and informational meetings is envisioned to expose parents to various strategies that they might use to help students to accomplish their goals, again an aspiration without detail on how, when, where this will occur during the period of the project. Since a plan for the improvement of learning and teaching to personalize the learning environment is referenced only in a general manner without specifics required by the RFP, applicant earns a score in the low range for this portion of the application.		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	4
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: Applicant's high quality plan for the staff development aspects of this portion of the application consists of establishing a reading clinic and implementing a teacher and principal evaluation tool called "School Improvement Network (SINET). On site NJCS courses in literacy for teachers is also noted with detail referenced at the New Jersey City University website: <a href="http://www.njcu.edu">www.njcu.edu</a> but without any specifics as to how the program might be implemented in Union City.While the goals of establishment of a reading clinic may address some of the components stated in (a) and (b) of the RFP for staff development they are not specific to it and again are supported by no timelines, objectives, deliverables, etc. The teacher and principal evaluation system description is a product of company literature and doesn't address specifically any of the components of this portion of the RFP thus earning applicant a low range score for this portion of the application.		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
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(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	3
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: Applicant fails to address any of the criteria noted in this portion of the application RFP and therefore earns a low range score. Applicant does however note access to content, tools and other learning resources and appropriate levels of technical support in order to do so. The export of data by students and parents in an open data system is noted as well as ensuring the District and schools use interoperable data systems.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: Applicant addresses this portion of the RFP by assuring the elements noted are in place without any evidence or supporting narrative and threfore earns a score in the low range for this portion of the application.		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	0
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The strategy noted here is implementation of the Educators Effectiveness System by School Improvement Network (SINET) with company literature narrative that fails to address this component of the RFP and therefore earns a low range score on this portion of the application.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: Applicant fails to address, meaning apparently omitted,any response to this portion of the RFP and therefore earns a low range score.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: Applicant lists performance measures in tables including requisite groups with modest goals for improvement of approximately two percent per year of grant implementation for gains. However, applicant fails to address, meaning omitted, a rationale for selection of these measures including: (a); how these measures will provide information bearing on implementation of the plan; (b) how the measure will provide information tailored to its proposed plan or (c) how it will review and improve the measures over time if they prove insufficient to monitoring plan progress and therefore earns low range score for this portion of the application.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: Applicant fails to address, meaning omitted a response to this portion of the RFP and therefore earns a low range score.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: Applicant submits budget numbers with appropriate categories, e.g. personnel, fringe benefits, travel, etc. with none of the accompanying narrative requested in (a)-(c) of this portion of the proposal e.g. does not identify all funds that will support the project, makes no case for these requested funds as reasonable and sufficient to support the proposal and provides no rationale for investments and priorities and therefore earns a low range score for this portion of the proposal.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: Project sustainability is not addressed and therefore earns a low range score.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: Not addressed.		

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: While personalized learning environments are mentioned beginning with the vision portion of the application, no coherent or comprehensive plan is put forward in this application to achieve this goal. Increasing student achievement and providing enriched learning environments for these predominately poor and underprivileged urban students is expressed as an aspiration and proposed to be accomplished through the use of partnerships, establishment of a reading clinic and adoption of a Educator Effectiveness System (SINET) that will develop staff to achieve these aspirations. None of these strategies are likely to result in the achievement of absolute priority 1 given the lack of specific measurable objectives, timelines, definitions of responsibilities or deliverables contained in this proposal therefore it is judged to have "not met" the stated criteria for absolute priority 1.		

Total	210	33
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #1304NJ-2 for Union City Board of Education

## A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The vision for the Union City proposal addresses the four core educational assurances describing a comprehensible reform plan through a program designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide students a personalized learning program created to improve learning and teaching, deepening student learning, and decreasing achievement gaps to increase equity; however, specific data used to define the improvements needed were not described or illustrated.</li> <li>develop robust data systems, tools and practices for students and educators that are aligned with college and career readiness and student academic success. However, the data system was not described and it is not clear if it already exists or must be developed.</li> <li>accelerate student achievement and deepen learning by meeting the individual needs of all students including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students struggling to meet standards in high needs schools. While several strategies were identified, none were sufficiently described to illustrate how a personalized student-learning environment will be achieved.</li> <li>develop a teacher, principal and superintendent evaluation systems that monitor effectiveness for all student populations. An example of the evaluation instrument for administrators was included in the appendix documents, but the teacher evaluation was not addressed.</li> </ul> The score for this aspect was earned in the lower middle range.		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: A reasonable approach to designing the program relevant to a high quality plan for targeted schools was described including the discussion relevant to school identifications as Title 1 and the use of demographic data to illustrate that the program will support schools serving 12,660 students with 930 educators. Data provided in the district summary table indicates that 100% of the schools meet the eligibility criteria for students living in poverty and students participating the school lunch programs. The table also provided a list of schools included in the district applications including 12 campuses and two early learning centers.  This aspect scored in the high range.		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A response for this aspect was not detected in the proposal. The application addressed A2 and A4 consecutively without including A3.</p> <p>This aspect scored in the low range.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Data tables were provided that illustrate targeted outcomes with baseline and growth expectations over the grant period in the areas of language arts literacy and mathematics. However, the information provided in the data table was not discussed to illustrate how the growth expectations were determined to support a high quality planning process. No goals were stated for student performance relevant to this achievement data.</p> <p>A data table was provided illustrating the projected decrease in achievement gaps over the grant period specifically illustrating expectations for all students, ELLs and special needs students in grades 4, 8, and 11 with a goal stated that was not written in a measurable format. Additionally, there was no discussion detected to describe how the growth expectations were determined to support a high quality planning process.</p> <p>Finally, while tables were included in the application for graduation rates and college enrollment rates, no data relevant to the applicant was included for review to determine how graduation rates and college enrollment will be addressed on an outcome basis to support a high quality planning approach.</p> <p>This aspect earned a score in the low range.</p>		

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	2
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The response described the implementation of 21st Century Community Learning grants and a National Science Foundation grant as measures of success for implementing grant programs. However, no dates were provided to illustrate if the programs have been in existence over the course of the past four years.</p> <p>While information is discussed indicating that the Union City School District is considered a highly-performing urban school district outperforming similar districts by 15-20%, especially with subgroups such as special needs and ELL students, specific data was not included in the response or referred to elsewhere in the application to illustrate the data over the last four years to support the statements.</p> <p>Finally, the response provided for this aspect did not specifically address the use of student performance data or how such data is made available to students, parents, and educators to inform on student progress or improve practices or services.</p> <p>This aspect was scored in the low range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The response provided for this aspect indicates that the district conducts and annual audit of financial practices and posts actual school level expenditures for K=12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support and school administration. However, the response did not provided a description for how the actual salaries and expenditures for school-level information is shared to illustrate transparency of policies, practices, and investments.</p> <p>A score in the low range was earned.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	0
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A letter was provided from the New Jersey Department of Education indicating that the plan was submitted for review, but the State declined the option to comment. While the response provided a reasonable description of the <i>Blueprint for Sustained Academic Achievement</i>, specific detail describing how the plan may be successfully implemented to provide personalized instruction through an autonomous approach under State laws and regulatory requirements was not provided.</p> <p>The score for this aspect was earned in the low range because conditions were not sufficiently addressed illustrating autonomy under State laws and requirements.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	2
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the proposal indicates some of the elements of the planning process, no evidence was provided to demonstrate a planning process that</p>		

incorporated the participation from students, families, teachers, principals or other stakeholders in the program schools. The response indicated that the initial planning will be initiated and completed by a planning committee, but no information was provided describing when this would occur.

No evidence was provided in the narrative or appendix documents to indicate that 70% of teachers on each campus support the proposal.

Letters of support were provided from four universities and one educational organization. While support and contribution is clearly indicated from the universities, it is not clear how the School Improvement Network is involved in the project.

The score earned for this aspect was in the low range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	0
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The response discussed the work of a planning committee that has been completed, but this response is conflicting with B4, which indicated that planning will be initiated and completed without defining when the planning would occur. The response failed to describe elements of a high quality plan that utilizes data to determine needs and gaps for students and teachers served by the program to create a personalized learning approach.</p> <p>A score for this aspect was earned in the low range.</p>		

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	7
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Union City School District provided a response illustrating the capacity to implement and expand comprehensive science and mathematics curriculum; however, aside from briefly discussing how assessments are used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the areas of science, literacy, and mathematics for the personalization of learning environments, the approach of personalized learning is not sufficiently described.</p> <p>The plan clearly described the intent to prepare students for college and careers in the science and mathematics fields, as demonstrated by the partnerships that have been in place in the district under National Science Foundation funding, internship opportunities for students, and participation in various programs that promote mathematics and science learning. The plan did not articulate how students are involved in the process to understand what they are learning and how to accomplish goals relevant to college or career desires. Moreover, while many opportunities were described relevant to deepening student learning experiences and mastery of critical content and skills, it is not clear how students are guided in selecting these experiences relevant to personal learning interests.</p> <p>The proposal described the plan for expanding and developing pre-K-12 curricula and assessment processes through the use of technology, digital learning content, and accommodations for English Language Learners and students with special needs. However, the plan did not describe how a personalized learning sequence of instructional content and skills will be implemented to ensure students are meeting academic achievement criteria, graduating on time, and ready for college or a chosen career.</p> <p>The use of student data or the system by which the data will be collected and analyzed was not described in the response. Therefore, the frequency of reporting student data for timely decision-making was not determined and information was not detected describing how personalized learning recommendations will be conveyed to teachers, students, and administrators in order to make learning plan and teacher effectiveness adjustments.</p> <p>A brief discussion was provided indicating that teachers, students and parents will be provided with access to training to understand the technology tools available to monitor student progress, but specifics on how this will be accomplished were not described.</p> <p>A score in the middle range was earned because the response failed to provide measurable goals aligned to a timeline identifying deliverable frequency and responsible parties necessary to demonstrate the capacity to implement a high quality planning process.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	9
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal specifically described a partnership with a local institution of higher education to develop a reading clinic targeted toward teachers to enable them to provide accurate diagnostic and corrective support for individual student reading concerns. Teachers will be provided with opportunities to participate in graduate level courses aligned reading elements such as phonemic awareness, fluency, phonics, word studies, vocabulary, and other related reading components. Attention will be given to the design of assessments measuring reading skills. While this response addressed the content area of reading, other content areas and strategies for college and career readiness were not discussed. Moreover, the use of frequent data measures toward meeting student academic achievement criteria, college and career readiness standards, and graduation requirements were not addressed. Finally, other topics of professional development were shared, but not sufficiently discussed to illustrate how it will be customizable to the district schools for personalized learning use specific to core content areas.</p> <p>A principal and teacher evaluation system was described relevant to the committee members and the plan to begin designing the system to be implemented in the 2013-2014 school year. The plan will incorporate the use of technology moving to a system where observations can be conducted online via a technology-based platform called TES. However, it is not clear if the observation will be conducted in person or through a video enriched capacity. Specific data and to be collected for administrators was provided in the appendix documents, but teacher evaluation criteria were not shared.</p> <p>An on-demand system of professional development offered through the School Improvement Network partner was described to access training</p>		

online. The system will be linked to other electronic tools, which were not identified, to build teacher capacity. The system is called the Teacher Effectiveness Systems (TES) and it proposes to collect data relevant to evaluation instruments, customizable templates for teacher and administrator effectiveness, capacity to upload documentation, collect data, prescribe technologies to synchronize observations, and to maintain educator portfolios.

The response indicated that the TES was designed with defined goals in mind, but the goals were not shared in the response.

The response earned a score in the middle range because while it addressed professional development, evaluation, and a data system necessary to work toward a high quality plan, it did not clearly address the type of data to be collected, processes or tools to match student needs relevant to college and career readiness, a timeframe for collection of data for most aspects discussed, or provide measurable goals to guide the implementation of stated plans.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	0
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: A response addressing D1 was not detected in the submission.  A score in the low range was earned.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	0
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:  The response restated the criteria required to satisfy the development of a high quality plan to ensure district practices, policies, and rules address the personalized learning infrastructure proposed in the plan, but it did not describe how each aspect would be defined and implemented for the program.  A score in the low range was earned.		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	0
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:  The proposal did not provide a response for aspect E1 to describe the continuous improvement process necessary to demonstrate a high quality planning process was developed to analyze data, provide timely feedback, make corrections to the program, and publically share progress with stakeholders.  This aspect earned a score in the low range.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:  Strageies for communication and engagement with students, teachers, adminsitratrs, parents and stakeholders were not detected in the section E to demonstrate the development of a high qulaity plan that effectively communicates progress and engages all stakeholders in the process.  A score in the low range was earned.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:  The response provided tables relevant to indicating access to highly effective and effective teachers and principals, which provided the same data for each performance measure without including a rationale, measurable goals, timeline, responsible party or deliverables describing how the data was determined or how the performance measures will be actionable.  The performance measures identified in the table for pre-K-3, 4-8, and 9-12 grade bands included measurable goals and relevant data. However, a rationale was not provided with timeline, deliverables, or responsible party information necessary to support a high quality planning process.  This aspect requires 12-14 performance measures, but only 10 were detected in the proposal.  The score for this aspect was earned in the low range.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		

The Union City proposal described a Teacher Effectiveness System that empowers teachers and school leaders to pursue personalized training opportunities for professional development needs using a web-based Web 2.0 format providing access to content, learning communities, portfolio development, facilitator guides and training through an individualized learning interface. The system allows principals and administrators to provide performance feedback from observations and formal evaluations, as well as prescribe professional development to address identified weaknesses.

Instructional coaches from a distance will be able to observe teachers through the use of classroom cameras to monitor implementation of effective teaching practices gained through participation in professional development. Several other functions were describe to support the plan. However, measurable goals and timelines were not provided to demonstrate how this system fits into a high quality planning process.

A score was earned in the middle range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	0
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget was provided in multiple spreadsheets created for different components of the grant, but a budget narrative was not provided to determine if the requested funds are reasonable or sufficient to address the program. Moreover, the total amount requested was not clearly determined and one-time investments were not identified and described.</p> <p>The narrative response for F1 repeated the information provided for B2 without addressing budget specific detail.</p> <p>This aspect earned a score in the low range.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget responses addressed F1, but discussion relevant to sustainability require to satisfy F2 was not detected in the proposal. Therefore, a high quality plan to address sustainability beyond the grant period could not be detected.</p> <p>This aspect earned a score in the low range.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	4
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presented a Port of Entry program to address the needs of newly arriving immigrants. The response indicated that a goal was provided, but it was not written in measurable format to ensure it is achievable. Specific community partners were not identified.</p> <p>Two population level results were identified including increasing the number of Port of Entry students that complete 4 years of high school and graduate and increase parental participation in district health clinics and social agency counseling services.</p> <p>While some deliverables were described including technology, field trips, guest speakers and professional development, the use of data and measurable goals, timelines, and responsible parties were not detected in the response to demonstrate capacity to deliver a high quality program.</p> <p>The score for this aspect was earned in the middle range.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal did not demonstrate that it met Absolute Priority 1 through a high quality plan, as measurable goals were not provided for all plan aspects and no timelines with specific actions, deliverables, and responsible parties were provided in the proposal. Additionally, a budget narrative was not provided to demonstrate how the requested expenditures sufficiently align with the program and to determine whether the request is reasonable. Finally, graduation rates, as well as college enrollment data and plans were missing from the proposal.</p> <p>The plan was scored in the Not Met category.</p>		



Total

210

44



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #1304NJ-3 for Union City Board of Education

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The narrative does a nice job of articulating a vision of reform that includes a promise to provide for engaging “hands-on” experiences and student-centered teaching and learning. The plan promises to conduct yearly needs assessments to determine student academic needs, health/social needs of students, curricular and instructional needs, effective strategies, alignment to common core standards, addressing limited English and special needs learners, use of educational technology, and an emphasis on literacy in all grade levels.</p> <p>The plan then expands the vision by stating to improve or enhance several items that address curriculum that includes 8 week benchmarks, professional development, principal and teacher evaluation systems, technology-based instruction, information systems, STEM opportunities, mental health services, and community awareness.</p> <p>The plan does not; however identify a vision for expanding learning opportunities outside of the normal calendar, through a variety of deliveries, or through personalized courses of study.</p> <p>The vision is robust but does not receive full credit due to the omission of the items mentioned in the previous paragraph. This section scores in the high range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The structures appear to be in place to potentially implement the vision of reform. The narrative does a good job of identifying student outcome goals related to measureable performance measures.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The data provided support the competition's eligibility requirements as the previous section indicates 87% of the student population is eligible for the federal lunch program.</li> <li>The tables in this section articulate which schools will be involved.</li> <li>The data tables identify participating students, students from low-income families, high-need students, and participating educators.</li> </ol> <p>As all schools in the LEA are participating in the project, the applicant has demonstrated a high-level of participation at the LEA and school level.</p> <p>The applicant receives full points for this section.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is no narrative associated with this section of the proposal. There is no explanation in the previous or following sections to indicate the information was simply mislabeled.</p> <p>The applicant fails to propose a high-quality plan that describes how the reform proposal will be designed, implemented, or expanded. There is no logic model or theory of change described or presented.</p> <p>The lack of any narrative in this section or specific data addressing a high-quality plan in previous or following sections indicate a very low score for this section.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a series of tables articulating current baseline of student performance with proposed growth for the duration of the proposed project. The tables are extremely difficult to read in both print and electronic format and supporting narrative explanation of the data is minimal.</p>		

- (a) performance data is presented in table format for language arts literacy per building.
  - (b) The applicant clearly proposes a decrease in the achievement gaps. There is no explanation of how those numbers were determined or by what percentage growth for each grade level, building, or sub-group.
  - (c) no data is provided for graduation rates
  - (d) no data is provided for college enrollment
  - (e) no data is provided for post secondary degree attainment.
- While there are data tables available to demonstrate a pattern of growth for all grade levels in language arts, there is no rationale for how those growth rates were determined. There is no data available for graduation or college enrollment. The lack of this data and the absence of rationale for determining growth rates, this section receives a low range score.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3
<div><div>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</div><div><p>The applicant provides information about current and previous projects and programs that have generally improved educational opportunities for students. However, the plan fails to provide statistical data related to student achievement to determine the exact impact of these programs.</p><p>(1)(a) There are no graphs, raw student data, or other evidence provided that clearly articulate improvement of student achievement.</p><p>(b) There is a general description of reform in specific projects including removal of low-level courses and the implementation of challenging course work but there is no data to support the claim that these changes in course offerings have significantly improved student learning, achievement, or outcomes.</p><p>(c) There is no student performance data presented in this section. There is no explanation of how data that may be available is shared with students, educators, or parents at all.</p><p>The lack of student data, charts, or graphs demonstrating clear evidence of student progress and success for the past several years indicate a low score for this section.</p></div></div>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<div><div>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</div><div><p>The applicant reports an overall operating budget of \$241,900,000. It indicates that it conducts annual audits by outside agencies.</p><div><div>a. The narrative states that it has demonstrated a high level of transparency by posting information on the district's web site. The information included in this posting includes actual personnel salaries at the school level.</div><div><div>b. Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff.</div><div><div>c. Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only</div><div><div>d. Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level.</div></div></div></div><p>There is also reference to reporting of several federal awards and state financial assistance that are included in its annual audit.</p><p>There is no additional information concerning these criteria other than to state that it is posted to the district's web site.</p><p>The applicant will receive full credit for this section.</p></div></div></div>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
<div><div>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</div><div><p>The applicant does little to explain the current systems in place at the state level that would allow district autonomy for implementation of the proposed project. The applicant did provide evidence of an e-mail response from the state concerning the application. The state chose not to provide feedback concerning the application.</p><p>The applicant goes on to describe a district blueprint for sustained academic achievement which is included in the appendix, however the document has no reference to changes in current delivery systems, student attendance, or credit acquisition that would indicate a variance from current state regulations.</p></div></div>		

The section then repeats information that was presented in previous sections of the proposal and therefore offered no new information concerning the relationship with the state and how the district will be allowed to deviate from current state requirements. By not including a description of differences in proposed activities and state requirements and a plan to work through those potential differences, this section scores in the middle range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

In this section, the applicant is very brief and vague. There is only a statement that says the district will develop protocols to collect and monitor the collection of data. Then it lists five areas including policy changes, professional development, collaborative development, awareness, and outreach.

- a. There is no explanation of how families, teachers, and principals were engaged in the development of the proposal.
- i. There is a signature on the application assurances page, however, there are initials right after the signature indicating the signature was not actually signed by that person. No explanation in the narrative of how teacher support was gained.
- b. There are no letters of support in the appendix from key stakeholders. There are a few letters of support from post-secondary institutions and a vendor, however, no letters from parent organizations, student organizations, community organizations, or advocacy groups.

While the following section indicates the planning committee included teachers, families, principals, and collective bargaining representation, there is not further explanation than that statement. In this section or in the appendix, there is a lack of any form of documentation of how the project was shared with key stakeholders places the score for this section in the low range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates that a formal planning committee worked to develop the plan. There is no narrative or information explaining how a high-quality plan for analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments will be conducted.

Lack of such a plan indicates this section scores in the low range.

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not deliver a high-quality plan that articulates specific steps and strategies for providing students with a personalized learning environment.</p> <p>(a)(i) There is no evidence presented on how students will be involved in understanding goals or learning plans. There is no mention of students setting goals or understanding how individual learning opportunities will be made available to students.</p> <p>(a)(ii) The plan presented in this section lacks continuity in terms of understanding how the individual initiatives outlined in the plan work together to form a cohesive learning system that allows students the ability to personalize their learning, achieve their goals, the measure progress towards those goals. There are no specific student objectives that are clearly articulated. No time lines are presented. There are no specific deliverables identified and persons responsible are not presented.</p> <p>(a)(iii) The plan does provide examples of deep learning experiences currently provided by the district in partnership with other organizations, however, there is no clear understanding of how many students are involved nor how these STEM projects relate to the identified goals of improving literacy that were outlined in the first sections of the proposal.</p> <p>(a)(iv) There is no information presented concerning diverse cultural experiences or perspectives.</p> <p>(a)(v) Again, there is no highly-developed plan that articulates specific activities concerning goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity and problem solving. The projects described in this section have the potential to provide those types of opportunities, but the presentation of the activities is disjointed and fails to explain how these activities relate to the overall context of personalized learning plans for ALL students.</p> <p>(b)(i) There is no connection between activities described in this section and any coherent sequence of instructional content.</p> <p>(b)(ii) Several high-quality instructional opportunities are presented in STEM content, however, there are no other content areas supported nor are the STEM activities described within the context of a larger well-articulated instructional plan.</p>		

(b)(iii) Digital learning content is not addressed in this section. There is no indication that digital learning formats will be made available to students. There is an opportunity for teachers to utilize professional development offerings through digital formats, but no provision for student use of digital content that would allow for varied instructional delivery to meet personalized learning needs.

(b)(iv)(a) There is no evidence of on going or regular feedback of individual student data. A previous section mentioned benchmarks would be set for every 8 weeks of instruction, however, this section does not articulate how those benchmarks will be assessed and reported to students and parents.

(b)(iv)(b) There is no formalized plan in place to identify how personal learning environments will be established nor is there any information concerning how student's current knowledge and skills will be utilized. There is no information or plan to address how students will be made aware of available content, instructional approaches, or supports.

(b)(v) The plan lacks explanation or provisions of how accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-needs students. There are no modification plans mentioned for high-needs students. The majority of this section addresses high-end projects. There is a small sub-section identified as Standards and high-quality assessments that states that the district's approach to learning engages all students, including limited English students and special needs students. However, there are no specific indicators of what that actually means.

(c) There is mention that parents will be partners in the process and that workshops and informational meetings will be conducted to expose parents to various strategies to help students utilize their goals. There are no specific details on how often the workshops will be conducted or the exact topics of the workshops.

The applicant provides information concerning past and current projects and partnerships that have been accomplished through various grants and programs for the past few years. The majority of the section's narrative focused on the implementation of expanded STEM programming. This is a worthy endeavor but seems out of place in context of the learning objectives and performance indicators based in literacy in previous sections of the proposal.

The applicant fails to deliver a high-quality plan that outlines specific student objectives or outcomes that indicate individualize learning plans allowing for a variety of delivery methods, possible variations in school days and hours, or even a variation of delivery through digital resources or environments. This section lacks a clear and well-established plan of action to accomplish the goals outlined in previous sections and seems out of context with previously established student outcomes. This section scores in the low middle range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does well to provide for specific strategies that will improve instructional practices including the implementation of a reading clinic, on-line professional development, instructional coaching, and a teacher and principal evaluation system. While all these elements are proposed, not all aspects of the plan are as well defined and developed as necessary to clearly impact all aspects of student learning.

(a)(i) The first paragraph of the section states that the proposal is designed to educate teachers about best practices that help middle school and secondary level students achieve success on literacy-based and critical thinking tasks. There is no mention of elementary teachers. There is also a concern that the teacher development plan again focuses on literacy-based strategies yet the previous section was highly focused on STEM activities for students. There also seems to be a general lack of explanation of how the efforts in professional development will ultimately impact effective implementation of personalized learning environments.

(a)(ii) There are no previsions for adapting content and instruction for students. There is no mention of project-based learning, collaborative work, and other such formats to be developed and delivered to students.

(a)(iii) The reading clinic identifies specific literacy related practices but fails to identify how development of these practices translate to student progress toward meeting college- and career ready standards.

(a)(iv) This is possibly the strongest portion of this section. The proposed teacher evaluation system will incorporate feedback to teachers through the use of the School Improvement Network. This network provides on-demand professional development and through the implementation of an on-line observation tool, school leadership will identify and evaluate teachers based on observations. The plan will be working along side the state of New Jersey's current teacher and principal evaluation processes that are currently under development.

(b)(i) The plan provides for access to on-line resources for teachers to improve instructional strategies but it does not describe how these strategies will be delivered to individual students based on individual needs.

(b)(ii) On-line digital content for teachers is mentioned in this section but there has been no provision made or products identified for student access or use.

(b)(iii) There is no information provided concerning processes used to match resources with student needs. The systems being proposed are directly related to improvement of teacher practices through delivery of professional development through an on-line format. The system is not designed to provide or deliver content to students based on teacher evaluation practices.

(c)(i) The applicant has made provisions to improve the teacher and principal evaluation systems through a series of specific actions that will likely improve instruction for students. The first measure is the implementation of a digital observation instrument. Both administrators as well as instructional coaches will conduct observations. The data from the observations and information from pre and post conferences will be submitted to the on-line system developed by school improvement network. From there, deficits in teacher instructional practices will be supported through access to on-line professional development programming provided by PD360.

(c)(ii) The narrative does not indicate how the multi-step workflow will be implemented nor the timelines of how often observations will take place. There is no explanation or plan in place to determine how staff will be trained in the use of the new evaluation systems.

(d) The applicant makes a reasonable effort in providing for practices and resources necessary to provide for highly-effective teachers and

principals through the process of classroom observations, pre and post observation conferences, data analysis of observation reports, and delivery of on-line professional development.

In addition to the evaluation system, the applicant has provided additional supports to increase skills of teachers in the area of literacy and writing. The implementation of the reading clinic that includes graduate level studies has the potential to improve literacy instruction. There is no estimation of how many of the district's teachers will participate in the reading clinic opportunities so it is unclear of how much impact the clinic will have on student performance.

The provision for a systematic evaluation system that includes opportunities for individualized professional development and the support systems proposed for the development of a reading clinic to address literacy is in line with the student performance indicators and goals identified in earlier sections of the proposal. This section warrants a high level score but lacks clear explanations of how these efforts will impact individualized student learning so will not be given full points.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	0
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: There is no narrative supporting section D1 in the application. There is no information in previous sections concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Organizing the LEA central office or consortium governance structure.</li> <li>b. Providing school leadership teams in participating schools with flexibility and etc.,</li> <li>c. Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery,</li> <li>d. Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times</li> <li>e. Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable</li> </ul> Because there is no narrative to demonstrate the inclusion of these elements in the plan and as there are no provisions in other sections of the narrative that address these elements, the applicant will receive no points for this section.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	1
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant does not provide any information in this section. There is a repeat of the criteria in sections a,b, and c but no articulation of how these elements will be addressed by the project. <p>(d) The applicant indicates that New jersey has a robust interoperable data system named NJ SMART and that all necessary data including human recourses data, as well as student identifier system.</p> The applicant fails to provide any information for this section with the exception of naming the New Jersey data system. This lack of explanation or clarification indicates a score of very low for this section.		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	0
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant does not identify section (E)(1) in the narrative. However, in the section identified as (E)(4) there is information concerning the continuous improvement of teaching and leading. This information, however, is not specific to the entire project proposal, but rather, provides feedback for the professional development and evaluation of teachers and principals through the School Improvement Network system. <p>There is no information on how the applicant will gather, evaluate, progress towards project goals in order to modify the plan.</p> The lack of any explanation of an improvement process for the entire project indicates this section will receive no score.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: This section is not clearly marked in the narrative. As in the previous section, there is no indication of how the task associated with this section		

will be accomplished or implemented. There simply is no information. The narrative following and identified as section (E)(4) provides for an explanation of the activities associated with implementation of the School Improvement Network system but fails to indicate how communication and engagement with stakeholders concerning the entire project will be conducted.

The lack of any narrative addressing this section indicates a very low score.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does provide tables of performance measures as outlined by the selection criteria. The measures are ambitious in some instances (80% highly effective teachers for all students) but not for others (35% special education students in grades 3 measuring as proficient on the state assessment.)

- a. The applicant offers no rationale for selecting measures in this section, however, the first section of the narrative identified literacy as a key goal for the district.
- b. The measures of literacy improvement and reduction seem appropriate in relation to the goals outlined in sections A and B of the proposal.
- c. There is no provision for how the applicant will review and improve the measure.

Performance measures include:

- 1. Highly effective teachers and principals
- 2. Effective teachers and principals
- 3. Proficient and partially proficient in literacy in grade 3
- 4. Decrease in special education referrals in PreK-3
- 5. Proficient and partially proficient in literacy in grade 4
- 6. Proficient and partially proficient in literacy in grade 8
- 7. Decrease in special education referrals in grades 4-8
- 8. Number of students who complete the free application for federal student aid
- 9. Proficient and partially proficient in literacy in grade 11
- 10. Decrease in special education referrals in grades 9-12

The proposal lacks performance indicators in number of students who are on track to college and career readiness. The applicant also fails to meet the minimum requirement of 12-14 performance measures. The lack of the on-track measure and shortage of total measures indicate a medium range score for this section.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This section appears to be a product sales prospectus for the School Improvement network. A total of eight pages are dedicated to an explanation of the system. The information is complete in explaining the use and purpose of the system for teacher evaluation, but does nothing to establish rationale or support for evaluating the entire project in its whole.

Due to the over explanation of the School Improvement Network system and the lack of additional information concerning the effectiveness of the entire project, this section scores in the low range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	1

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget appears to be incomplete. There is no total budget section. Component budgets are cut off and the four-year total column is unreadable.

There is no budget explanation section to account for the budget figures presented in the budget sheets.

- (a) It is impossible to determine if all funds are included as the budget is incomplete.
- (b)(i) There is no description of funds in any way other than total budget amounts entered into the budget forms.
- (b)(ii) As there are no budget explanations, it is not possible to determine what funds are targeted for one-time investments. In addition, as each budget year has identical budget amounts, there is no way to know for sure if on-time investments are happening each year and for what.

This budget is not complete and does not include enough information to truly evaluate the use of proposed funds.

The total budget sheets are missing. There are no budget narrative tables to determine how budget amounts were determined.

The lack of supporting information and total budget sheets indicate a very low score for this section.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: There is no narrative for this section of the proposal. There are no provisions in previous sections to indicate plans for sustainability of the project's goals.  The lack of any information within this section or in previous sections indicate a very low score for this section.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides for a Port of Entry program to address the educational, social, and health needs of newly arrived immigrant students. The system has been in place for eleven years and has received several awards. The graduation rate of the current program is 60%, however, the proposal is to increase that percentage to 100%.  1. Partnering agencies are identified as: NJ School based youth services program, Hoboken University Medical center, NJDOE success bridges program, St. Peter's University. There do not appear to be any business partners included in the proposal. 2. The desired result for the population is to increase graduation rates to 100% 3. (a) Selection indicators will be easy to track. All participants must be new immigrants living in the US for less than three years.  (b)There is no information available in the proposal to determine how data will be utilized to track the progress of participants.  a. The system is already in place. Funds will be utilized to expand the program to meet the needs to more students and families. b. There is no information on how the program will improve results over time.  4. Education will be integrated through extended class time, field trips, parent involvement, guest speakers, and additional guidance counseling services.  (5)(a) The plan indicates additional professional development will be provided for teachers working with students involved in the program. (5)(b) no plan is presented to identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school that are aligned with the goals identified. (5)(c) The plan includes the involvement of project partners and school staff in evaluating program supports. (5)(d) Parents and community members are included in the program through involvement in parent meetings, guest speakers, and provision of bi-lingual materials. (6) annual performance measures are in place and are ambitious yet achievable. The measures include the percentage of Port of Entry students proficient in literacy and math on the NJ statewide test.  The competitive priority project seeks to improve instructional outcomes from newly immigrated students. The program has been in existence for eleven years and has a graduation rate of 60% for students who have participated in the program. This proposal seeks to expand that graduation rate to 100%.  While the plan is ambitious, it is not clearly articulated as to the exact systems that will be put in place to accomplish its goals. There is little documentation to support the proposed activities other than a vague explanation of what has taken place in the past. With the exception of the addition of guidance counselors, there is not a clear understanding of what additional activities and expenditures will be provided.  This section sores in the middle range.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This proposal does not meet the absolute priority of providing personalized learning environments.</p> <p>The initial reform vision was well articulated and outlined specific areas of need but failed in providing a high-quality plan of implementation.</p> <p>Student Outcome goals in section A2 of the proposal were clear and the explanation of planning committee to address five areas of implementation was promising. However, as the plan progressed, there was a lack of specific details of how the reform vision would be delivered.</p> <p>School demographics were clearly presented and the student outcome goals were clearly identified and measured as increasing student literacy in all grade levels.</p> <p>While the district claims a clear track record of success, it fails to provide adequate data to substantiate the claim. In addition, the proposal failed to articulate how personal learning environments would be accomplished and how the state department of education would support the proposal and allow the district the ability to provide changes to current instructional practices.</p> <p>The plane failed to articulate how students would access did not personalize learning opportunities nor did it provide information concerning the addition of new instructional formats, deliveries, or resources.</p> <p>While the project did provide for changes in teacher evaluations and access to on-line professional development, the plan lacked follow through on how improved instructional strategies would ultimately effect the students in the classroom.</p> <p>The failure to identify how students would be served in a personalized learning format or to explain how current instructional practices would be altered to provide for expanded learning opportunities indicate that this proposal does not meet absolute priority 1 in providing for or supporting personalized learning environments for students.</p>		
Total	210	72